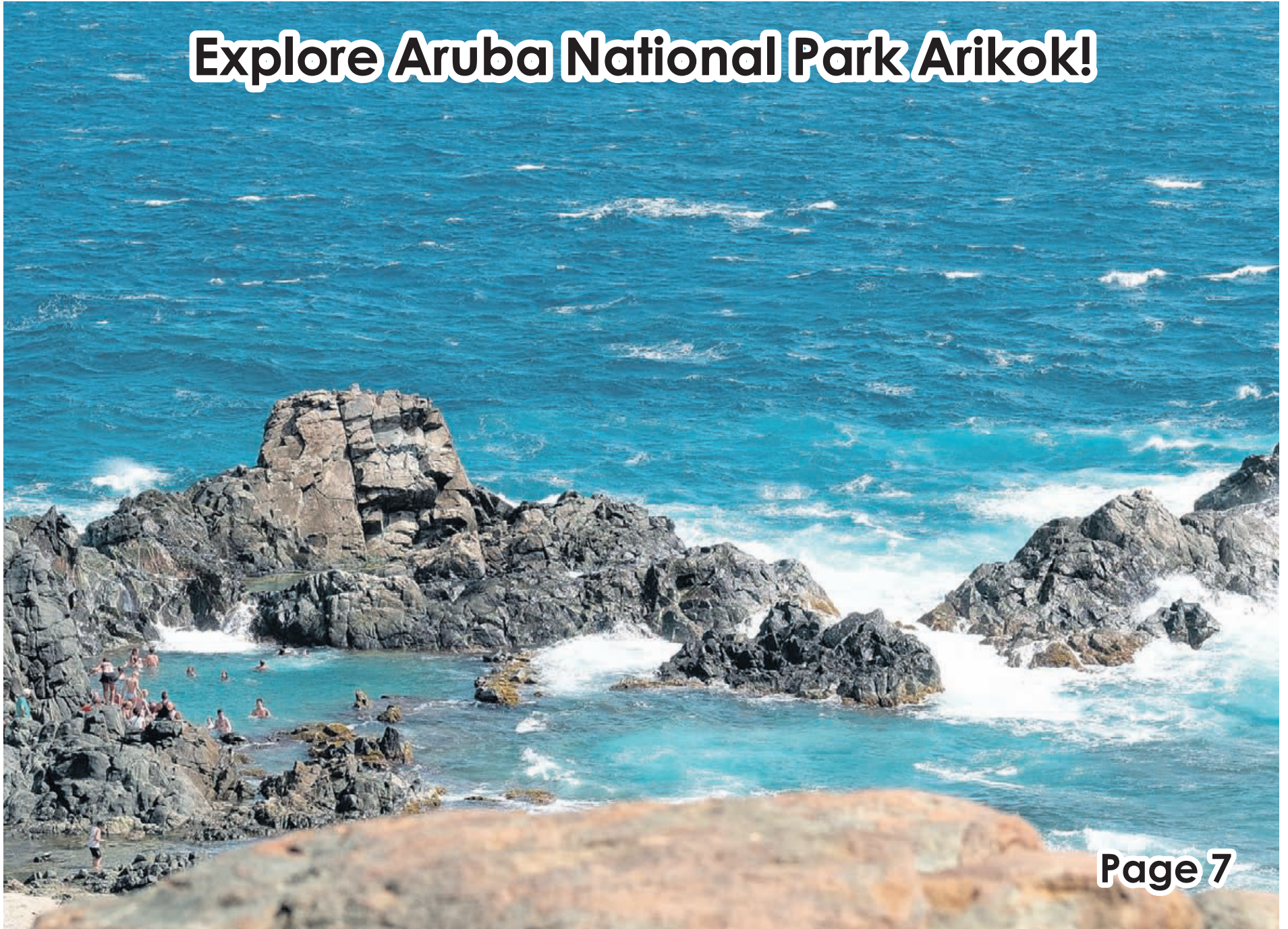




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Former Trump lawyer Alina Habba is disqualified as top New Jersey prosecutor, US appeals court rules

By **MIKE CATALINI**

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer Alina Habba is disqualified from serving as New Jersey's top federal prosecutor despite his administration's maneuvers to keep her in the role, an appeals court said Monday.

A panel of judges from the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sitting in Philadelphia sided with a lower-court judge's ruling after hearing oral arguments at which Habba was present on Oct. 20.

"It is apparent that the current administration has been frustrated by some of the legal and political barriers to getting its appointees in place. Its efforts to elevate its preferred candidate for U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Alina Habba, to the role of Acting U.S. Attorney demonstrate the difficulties it has faced yet the citizens of New Jersey and the loyal employees in the U.S. Attorney's Office deserve some clarity and stability," the court wrote in a 32-page opinion.

It concluded: "We will affirm the District Court's disqualification order."

The ruling comes amid the push by Trump's Republican administration to keep Habba as the acting U.S. attorney for New Jersey, a powerful post charged with enforcing federal criminal and civil law. It also comes after the judges questioned the government's moves to keep Habba in place after her interim appointment expired and without her getting Senate confirmation.



Alina Habba, President Donald Trump's pick to be the interim U.S. Attorney for New Jersey, speaks with reporters outside the White House, March 26, 2025, in Washington.

Habba said after that hearing in a statement posted to X that she was fighting on behalf of other candidates to be federal prosecutors who have been denied a chance for a Senate hearing.

The White House had no immediate comment on Habba on Monday and referred questions to the Justice Department. Messages were left Monday seeking comment from the U.S. attorney's office in New Jersey, Habba's personal staffer and the Justice Department.

The decision affirmed Habba is serving unlawfully, attorneys for the appellees said in an emailed statement.

"We will continue to challenge President Trump's unlawful appointments of purported U.S. Attorneys wherever appropriate," said attorneys Abbe Lowell, Gerry Krovin and Norm Eisen in the statement.

Other appointments have been challenged, too. Habba is hardly the only Trump administration prosecutor whose appointment has been challenged by defense lawyers.

Last week, a federal judge dismissed criminal cases against former FBI Director James Comey and New York Attorney General Letitia James after concluding that the hastily installed prosecutor who filed the charges, Lindsey Halligan, was unlawfully appointed to the position of interim U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. The Justice Department has said it intends to appeal the rulings.

Similar challenges to other Trump appointees played out in Nevada, where a federal judge disqualified the president's appointee as well.

Also, lawyers for James are expected to challenge the authority of the acting U.S. attorney in Albany, New York, John Sarcone, at a hearing on Thursday. The arguments in Albany to block subpoenas come as James pushes back against the Trump administration's investigation of cases she brought against Trump and the National Rifle Association.

The judges on the panel

were two appointed by Republican President George W. Bush, D. Brooks Smith and D. Michael Fisher, as well as one named by Democratic President Barack Obama, Luis Felipe Restrepo.

The judge said Habba was unlawfully serving

A lower-court judge, Matthew Brann, said in August that Habba's appointment was done with a "novel series of legal and personnel moves" and that she was unlawfully serving as U.S. attorney for New Jersey.

That order said Habba's actions since July could be invalidated, but the judge stayed the order pending appeal.

The government argued Habba is validly serving in the role under a federal statute allowing the first assistant attorney, a post she was appointed to by the Trump administration.

Who challenged Habba's tenure?

The Habba case comes after several people charged with federal crimes in New Jersey challenged the legality of her tenure. They sought to block the charges, arguing she didn't have the authority to prosecute their cases after her 120-day term as interim U.S. attorney expired.

Habba was Trump's attorney in criminal and civil proceedings before he was elected to a second term. She served as a White House adviser briefly before Trump named her as a federal prosecutor in March.

Shortly after her appointment, she said in an interview that she hoped to help "turn New Jersey red," a rare overt political expression from a prosecutor.

She then brought a trespassing charge, eventually dropped, against Democratic Newark, New Jersey, Mayor Ras Baraka stemming from his visit to a federal immigration detention center.

Habba later charged Democratic U.S. Rep. LaMonica McIver with assault stemming from the same incident, a rare federal criminal case against a sitting member of Congress other than for corruption. McIver denied the charges and pleaded not guilty. The case is pending. Questions about whether Habba would continue in the job arose in July when her temporary appointment was ending and it became clear New Jersey's two Democratic U.S. senators, Cory Booker and Andy Kim, would not back her appointment.

Earlier this year as Habba's appointment was expiring, federal judges in New Jersey exercised their power under the law to replace her with a career prosecutor who had served as her second-in-command.

Attorney General Pam Bondi then fired the prosecutor installed by the judges and renamed Habba as acting U.S. attorney. The Justice Department said the judges acted prematurely and said Trump had the authority to appoint his preferred candidate to enforce federal laws in the state.

Brann's ruling said the president's appointments are still subject to the time limits and power-sharing rules laid out in federal law. □



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Chairman of vaccine committee leaves for new HHS job

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s controversial vaccine advisory committee will be meeting later this week under a new chairperson, federal officials announced Monday.

Martin Kulldorff is leaving the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to take a leadership role within the Department of Health and Human Services, officials said. Dr. Kirk Milhoan, who has blamed vaccines for causing cardiovascular disease, will become the new chair. He had been appointed to the committee in September.

Later this week, the committee is scheduled to discuss the pediatric vaccine schedule and hepatitis B shots given to newborns.

HHS officials issued a press release praising Kulldorff and his work while leading the panel but did not answer additional questions about the changes. Kulldorff did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment. Kennedy has remade the committee

The committee makes recommendations to the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on how already-approved vaccines should be used. CDC directors almost always ad-



Dr. Martin Kulldorff speaks during a meeting of the Advisory Committee in Immunization Practices at the CDC, June 25, 2025, in Atlanta.

opted the committee's recommendations, which were widely heeded by doctors and guide vaccination programs.

Kennedy, a leading anti-vaccine activist before becoming the nation's top health official, fired the entire 17-member panel earlier this year and replaced it with a group that includes several anti-vaccine voices. He also named Kulldorff as chairman.

Under Kulldorff's leadership, the group made several decisions that angered major medical groups.

At a June meeting, the panel recommended that a preservative called thimerosal be removed from doses of flu vaccine even though some members acknowledged there was no proof it was causing harm.

In September, the group recommended new restrictions on a combination shot that protects against chickenpox as well as measles, mumps and rubella. The panel also took the unprecedented step of not recommending COVID-19 vaccinations not even for high-risk populations like seniors instead making it

a matter of personal choice. Several doctors' groups said the changes were not based on good evidence, and advised doctors and patients to follow guidance that was previously in place.

Kulldorff is moving to an HHS role. Kulldorff's departure leaves the vaccine committee with 11 members.

It will now be led by Milhoan, a pediatric cardiologist who with his wife operates a medical missionary organization called For Hearts and Souls. He appeared at a 2024 congressional hearing

at which he said an increase in cardiovascular disease in older teens and young adults should be attributed to vaccines. Kulldorff is a Swedish-born biostatistician who was a co-author of the Great Barrington Declaration, an October 2020 letter maintaining that pandemic shutdowns were causing irreparable harm.

During his time as ACIP chair, the committee abandoned its traditional "evidence-to-recommendation" framework, which involved many months of analysis and discussion before proposals came before the full committee for a vote.

In his new role, Kulldorff will become chief science officer within the HHS planning and evaluation office. Officials described the office as the department's "in-house think tank."

"I look forward to contributing to the science-based public health policies that will Make America Healthy Again," Kulldorff said in the HHS press release.

Committee is expected to vote on hepatitis shots

The vaccine committee is scheduled to meet Thursday and Friday in Atlanta, with a vote expected on whether to change the recommendation on shots for newborns against hepatitis B, which can cause serious liver infections. □

National Guard member shot in DC has shown positive signs, West Virginia governor says

By **JOHN RABY**
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A West Virginia National Guard member who was shot last week in a brazen daytime attack in Washington, D.C., remains in serious condition but showed positive signs by giving a thumbs-up that he could hear a nurse's question and wiggling his toes, Gov. Patrick Morrisey said Monday.

Morrisey said the family of 24-year-old U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe has asked the public to pray for him. Another member of the West Virginia National Guard, U.S. Army Spc. Sarah Beckstrom, 20, was killed in the shooting.

"Andrew is still fighting for his life," Morrisey said. "Andrew needs prayers."

Morrisey said he could not yet share details of any funeral arrangements for Beckstrom and wants to respect her family's wishes.

Beckstrom and Wolfe were shot Wednesday just blocks from the White House while deployed as part of President Donald Trump's crime-fighting plan that federalized D.C. police.

Investigators are working to determine a motive. Rahmanullah Lakanwal, a 29-year-old Afghan national, is charged with one count of first-degree murder and two counts of assault in the shooting.

Authorities said Lakanwal, who was shot in the confrontation, remained hospitalized and a court appearance has not yet been scheduled.

The shooting prompted the Trump administration to halt all asylum decisions and pause issuing visas for people traveling on Afghan passports.

After the shooting, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Trump asked him to send 500 more National Guard members to Washington. □



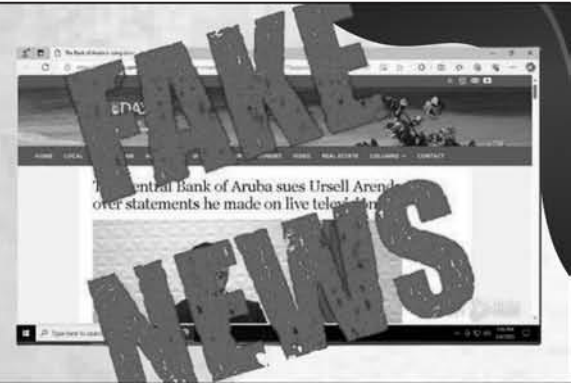
A person walks past a makeshift memorial for U.S. Army Spc. Sarah Beckstrom and U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe outside of Farragut West Station, near the site where the two National Guard members were shot, Monday, Dec. 1, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press.

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Hong Kong fire probe reveals unsafe netting as public mourns and government stifles dissent

By **CHAN HO-HIM** and **DAVID RISING**

Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong officials said Monday that their investigation into a deadly blaze that killed at least 151 has revealed some of the netting that covered scaffolding used in renovations was not up to fire-safety codes, as a wave of public sympathy and support was met by government moves to stifle criticism.

Wednesday's blaze, which took until Friday to fully extinguish, started on the lower-level netting covering bamboo scaffolding around one building in the high-rise Wang Fuk Court complex. It then swept inside as foam panels placed over windows caught fire and blew out the glass. Winds carried flames from building to building that all were covered in scaffolding and netting, until seven of eight were ablaze.

Initial tests of the netting showed it was up to code, but subsequently investigators collected 20 samples from all areas, including higher floors, and found seven failed safety standards, suggesting contractors skimmed to make greater profits, said Eric Chan, Hong Kong's Chief Secretary.

"They just wanted to make money at the expense of people's lives," he told reporters.

Donations for survivors of the fire had reached 900 million Hong Kong dollars (\$115 million) as of Monday, authorities said, as a steady stream of people placed flowers, cards and other tributes at a makeshift memorial near the burned out block of buildings.

"When something happens, we come out to help each



People offer flowers for the victims near the site of a deadly Wednesday fire at Wang Fuk Court, a residential estate in the Tai Po district of Hong Kong's New Territories on Monday, Dec. 1, 2025. Associated Press.

other," said Loretta Loh, after paying her regards at the site. "I have a heavy heart."

Some 4,600 people lived in the Wang Fuk Court complex in the suburb of Tai Po. Hong Kong police Disaster Victim Identification Unit staff had searched five of the burned buildings but only made partial progress through the remaining two, said Tsang Shuk-yin, head of the police casualty enquiry unit. Teams were assessing the safety of the other buildings, including the one that caught fire first and suffered the worst damage.

On Monday they recovered another eight bodies, including three that firefighters found earlier but could not retrieve. Dozens of people remain unaccounted for, but some are likely among the 39 bodies not yet identified, Tsang said.

"We will have to wait until we get through all seven blocks before we can make a final report," she said.

Private donations and 300 million Hong Kong dollars (\$38.5 million) in start-up capital from the government will be used to help victims rebuild their homes and provide long-term support, local officials said. The government has also given survivors cash subsidies to help with expenses, including funerals, and is working to find them housing.

By Monday, 683 residents had found places in local hotels and hostels, and another 1,144 moved into transitional housing units. Two emergency shelters remained open for others, authorities said.

Residents had complained for almost a year about the construction netting, Hong Kong's Labor Department said. It confirmed officials had carried out 16 inspections of the renovation project since July 2024 and had warned contractors multiple times in writing that they had to meet fire safety requirements. The latest in-

spection was just a week before the fire.

Hong Kong's anti-corruption authorities and police have arrested 14 people, including the directors and an engineering consultant of a construction company, according to Chris Tang, the secretary for security. People increasingly have been questioning whether government officials should also be held responsible.

"People are angry and think that the HK (Hong Kong) government should be accountable," said Jean-Pierre Cabestan, a locally-based political scientist and senior research fellow at Paris's Asia Centre think tank.

But the leeway for dissent is limited in the former British colony, which came under Chinese control in 1997 and has moved to quiet public criticism on national security grounds.

"There are rumors being spread by bad people giving fake news about the

firefighters not employing the correct tactics to fight the fire, or victims being charged 8,000 Hong Kong dollars a night to stay in hotels - these are all false," Tang said.

"We will arrest these rumor mongers."

On Saturday, the Office for Safeguarding National Security blasted what it called "evil schemes" that had "the ulterior motives of using the disaster to create trouble and disrupt Hong Kong." It did not give specifics.

Also Saturday, a man who helped organize an online petition calling for government accountability was arrested on suspicion of sedition, local media including HK01 and Sing Tao Daily reported. Two others were arrested on Sunday, including a volunteer who offered help in Tai Po after the fire broke out, the same outlets reported.

Cabestan said Hong Kong officials were operating like authorities in mainland China, forestalling protests before they might develop. Tang would not give specific details of the three arrests, but said that police "must take action" against those who try to "endanger national security," saying broadly that some people have been "taking advantage of the saddening moment ... and attempting to incite hatred against the government." Dissent in the city has been muzzled since hundreds of thousands took to the streets in 2019 against government plans to allow extradition to mainland China.

Hong Kong now virtually bans mass protests and bars opposition political figures from running in legislature elections. □

Gangs launch large-scale attack in Haiti's central region as hundreds flee gunfire and burning homes

By JUNIOR RACINE, DÁNICA COTO and EVENS SANON
Associated Press

SAINT-MARC, Haiti (AP) — Heavily armed gangs attacked Haiti's central region over the weekend, killing men, women and children as they set fire to homes and forced survivors to flee into the darkness. Police made emergency calls for backup, asserting that 50% of the Artibonite region had fallen under gang control after the large-scale attacks targeting towns including Bercy and Pont-Sondé.

"The population cannot live, cannot work, cannot move," one of Haiti's police unions, SPNH-17, said Sunday on X. "Losing the country's 2 largest departments West and Artibonite — is the greatest security failure in modern Haitian history."

The bulk of Haiti's police force and the Kenyan officers leading a U.N.-backed mission to help repel gangs are in the capital, Port-au-Prince, which itself is largely held by gangs.

Guerby Simeus, a Pont-Sondé official, told The Associated Press by phone on Monday that he had confirmed nearly a dozen deaths, including a mother and her child and a local



A man rides his bicycle past police station in Pont-Sondé, Haiti, Oct. 7, 2024.

government employee. "The gangs are still in Pont-Sondé," he said, noting that no additional police had arrived.

A run for the coast Many survivors fled to the coastal town of Saint-Marc, where hundreds of angry people on Monday demanded that the government take action against gangs who have repeatedly attacked Haiti's central region.

"Give me the guns! I'm go-

ing to fight the gangs!" said René Charles, who survived the attack. "We've got to stand up and fight!"

The crowd tried to break into the mayor's office with one unidentified man telling the AP that they weren't going to rely on the government any longer: "We're going to take justice into our own hands!"

Charlesma Jean Marcos, a political activist, said the gang announced last week that they were going

to invade the area, and that they alerted authorities to no avail.

"For now, the only people really fighting (the gang) is the self-defense group," he said. "A country cannot run like this." Marcos urged all the survivors sleeping on the street and in public parks to instead sleep inside police stations and government offices until the government can take back Artibonite.

"A lot of people are going

to be hungry," he warned. "We can support you today, we can support you tomorrow, but we won't be able to support you forever."

More than half of Haiti's population is already experiencing crisis levels of hunger or worse, with gangs blocking main roads and the ongoing violence displacing a record 1.4 million people.

A region overrun with gangs

The attacks in central Haiti began late Friday and late Saturday, with gang members broadcasting them live on social media.

The attacks were blamed on the Gran Grif gang, which operates in the area and was responsible for an attack on Pont-Sondé in October 2024 that killed at least 100 people, one of the biggest massacres in Haiti's recent history.

"I heard heavy shooting, so much shooting," one unidentified man recalled to The Associated Press and criticized the lack of police, saying he was stuck inside his house all weekend until Monday morning. "Why don't they send any drones to Artibonite? They just use the drones in Port-au-Prince." □

Associated Press.

Cameroon's top opposition leader dies after weeks of detention

By NALOVA AKUA and EM-MANUEL TUMANJONG
Associated Press

DOUALA, Cameroon (AP) — Cameroon's top opposition leader, Anicet Ekane, has died after weeks of detention at the age of 74, his lawyers and family said Monday, alleging that he had struggled to breathe but didn't receive proper care.

Ekane was arrested in late October alongside other top figures of his African Movement for New Independence and Democracy party as protests rattled the country over allegations of fraud in the presidential election. He was detained on charges of insurrection, his lawyer Emmanuel Simh told The

Associated Press.

"Mr. Ekane was critically sick, he was denied appropriate treatment," Simh said. "We're still in the shock and sadness. Ekane committed no crime, so we need to know why he was arrested and abandoned in the prison cell of the paramilitary gendarmerie."

Cameroon's communication minister, Rene Emmanuel Sadi, expressed the government's regret and said President Paul Biya has ordered an investigation into the circumstances leading to Ekane's death.

Ekane was among opposition figures objecting to the result of the Oct. 12 election in which Biya, the

world's oldest president at 92, was declared the winner of another term. Rival candidate Issa Tchiroma Bakary claimed to have won and has called on Cameroonians to reject the official result.

Cameroon's defense ministry on Monday said Ekane died "following an illness." It said an investigation has been opened.

"The deceased, who suffered from various chronic illnesses, had since been hospitalized at the National Gendarmerie Military Medical Center," the ministry said. "He was receiving appropriate care from the Military Medical Corps, in conjunction with his personal physicians, and benefiting from additional

follow-up care in local hospitals."

Both Ekane's party and the Union for Change political platform that he led asserted in statements that he was "murdered," and called for an international investigation.

Muna Ekane, Ekane's eldest son, told the AP his father's health had worsened Sunday.

"For one week, he had difficulties breathing; he was suffocating," the son said. "He was diagnosed while in detention but no proper treatment was followed. He had difficulties eating. We spent the whole week alerting public authorities about his worsening health situation but nothing was done." □

He did not say what his father was diagnosed with, describing it as "respiratory problems."

He added that he believed his father had been arrested for supporting Tchiroma, who fled to Gambia last month.

Following the announcement of the election results, deadly protests erupted in key opposition strongholds. While Cameroon's government said 16 people were killed, opposition figures and human rights groups estimated the death toll at more than 55.

The European Union has called for the release of those "arbitrarily detained" since the election. □

West African bloc delegation says talks with Guinea-Bissau coup leaders will continue

By **ASSANA SAMBU and MONIKA PRONCZUK**
Associated Press

BISSAU, Guinea-Bissau (AP)

— A delegation from the West African regional bloc known as ECOWAS made no headway in talks Monday with coup leaders in Guinea-Bissau but said at the end of its visit that discussions would continue later this month.

The ECOWAS mission, led by its chairman and the President of Sierra Leone Julius Maada Bio, came to Guinea-Bissau to appeal with the military authorities for a “complete restoration of constitutional order.” The military which seized power last Wednesday has banned all demonstrations, strikes and activities regarded as threat to peace and stability of the West African country.

“We’ve had today very fruitful discussions,” said Sierra Leone’s Foreign Minister Timothy Musa Kabba. “Both sides have expressed their different concerns.”

As the ECOWAS chairman, Bio “condemned the coup,” the minister said, adding that the military authorities said the coup was



Women walk past people shopping at a market in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, Friday, Nov. 28, 2025.
Associated Press.

necessary to “to restore order and security.”

João Bernardo Vieira, the newly appointed foreign minister of Guinea Bissau said it was “very clearly established” that ECOWAS would not leave Guinea-Bissau “during this difficult period.”

“The transitional authorities and the military will continue their discussions,” he

said. “A one-year deadline had been set for the end of the transition, but the matter will be submitted to the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government on December 14.” Soldiers seized power in the West African nation three days after a closely contested presidential election which the two main contenders claim to have won.

During the coup Guinea-Bissau’s President Umaro Sissoco Embaló told French media by phone that he had been deposed and arrested. Embalo has since fled to the Republic of Congo’s capital Brazzaville. Guinea-Bissau’s military has installed former army chief of staff Gen. Horta Inta-a as the head of the military government, which will

oversee a one-year transition period. On Saturday Inta-a appointed a new 28-member government, most of whom are allies of the ousted president.

Nigeria said its President Bola Tinubu has granted protection for Guinea-Bissau opposition candidate Fernando Dias da Costa in response to an “imminent threat to his life.”

According to a letter to ECOWAS from Nigeria on Sunday, Dias da Costa is at the Nigerian Embassy in Bissau, the country’s capital. The letter requested an ECOWAS troop to provide security. The day after the coup, ECOWAS said it suspended Guinea-Bissau from its decision-making bodies “until the restoration of full and effective constitutional order in the country.” It said its mediation team would travel to Bissau to “engage the leaders of the coup with a view to ensuring the full restoration of constitutional order.”

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres expressed grave concern over the events in Guinea-Bissau and condemned the coup. In a statement, □

ICC president vows to resist US and Russian pressure despite sanctions and threats

By **MOLLY QUELL**
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)

— The president of the International Criminal Court said during the institution’s annual meeting Monday that it will not bow to pressure from the United States and Russia.

Nine staff members, including six judges and the court’s chief prosecutor, have been sanctioned by U.S. President Donald Trump for pursuing investigations into U.S. and Israeli officials, while Moscow has issued warrants for staff in response to an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin over the war in Ukraine.

“We never accept any kind of pressure,” Judge Tomoko Akane told delega-

tions from the court’s 125 member states.

The sanctions have taken their toll on the court’s work across a broad array of investigations at a time when the institution is juggling

ever more demands on its resources.

In her address last year, Akane warned that the court was being threatened by the incoming Trump administration. Three

weeks after he took office for the second time, Trump signed an executive order imposing sanctions on Prosecutor Karim Khan over investigations of Israel, a close U.S. ally.

The court has issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defense minister, Yoav Gallant, for alleged war crimes over Israel’s military offensive in Gaza after the deadly Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks.

The court’s weeklong meeting opened Monday. Business on the agenda includes approving its budget against a backdrop of mounting pressure and unfavorable headlines.

The ICC was established in 2002 as the world’s permanent court of last resort

to prosecute individuals responsible for the most heinous atrocities war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression. The U.S., Israel, Russia and China are among the nations that are not members.

The court only takes action when nations are unable or unwilling to prosecute those crimes on their territory.

The ICC has no police force and relies on member states to execute arrest warrants.

On top of staff facing sanctions and arrest warrants, Khan has stepped down temporarily pending the outcome of an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct. He denies the allegations. □



A general view of the exterior of the International Criminal Court is seen in The Hague, Netherlands, March 12, 2025.

Associated Press.

National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the bright blue Cododo or mighty Warawara.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: A majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heading back to the ocean after laying her eggs during breeding season. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna



against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is

broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is an adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, or 4x4 vehicle. As of 2020, ATV's and UTVs are not allowed in the park due to its significant impact on nature.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult

conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), formerly known as Aruba National Park Foundation, manages the national park. This foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of ACF. In 2019, preliminary management plan for marine were introduced for Parke Marino to conserve reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests and in 2020 ACF was given additional management areas such as the Saliñas (Druif, Malmok, Cerca, Palm Beach, Bubali etc.) and also additional areas such as Rooi Manonchi, Ser'I Teishi etc. Managed areas can be seen here: <https://acf.aw/>.

Visit the National Park Arikok to see the wonder of Aruba's nature. The visitor center in San Fuego and entrance in Vader Piet (San Nicolas) is open daily from 8:00 AM to 16:00 PM. Contact the ACF via e-mail, info@acf.aw or call +297 585 1234 for more information. □



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Casago
Aruba

Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beautiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued decorating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Gerardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Buguruy.

This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those



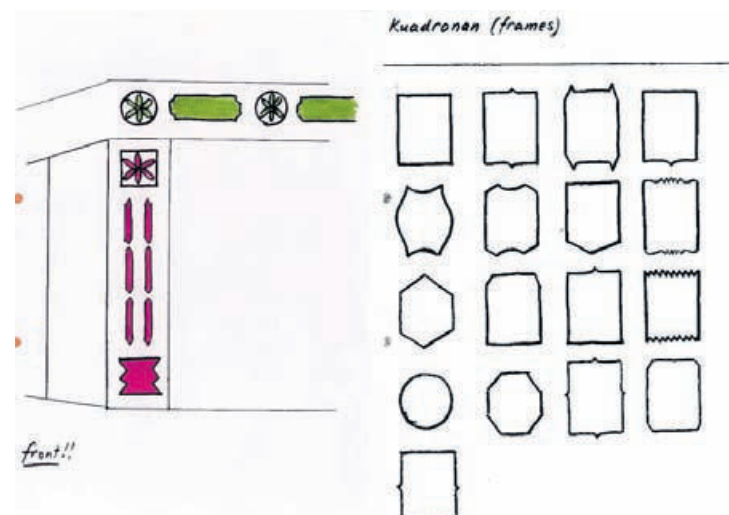
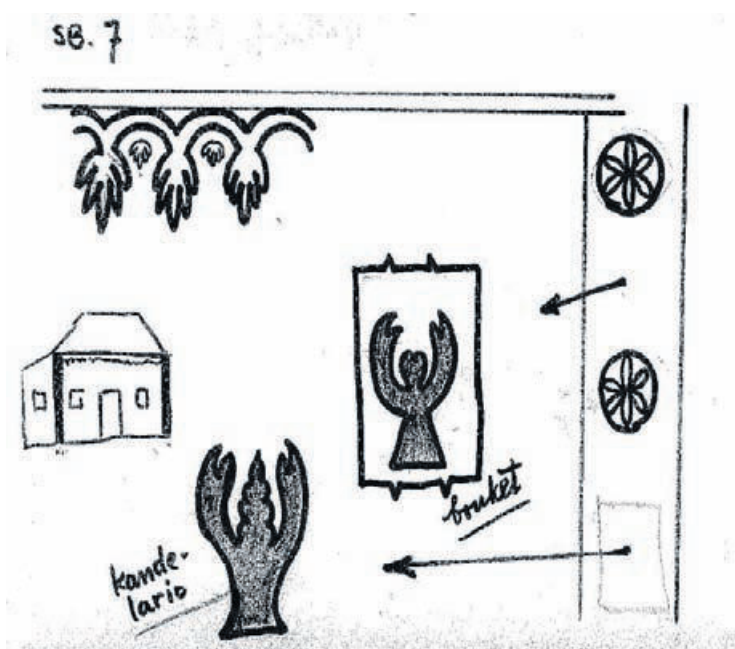
in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

Even today, the patterns are well preserved and protected, but they are no longer used.

Janchi Christiaans began cutting the patterns out of zinc plates and cardboard. He also had his own creations and systems, while Leoncio and Bonifacio Henricus produced their own fantasies. This is what made these decorations popular: many people could turn their imagination into expressive art.

However, the decoration of houses was not originally Janchi Christiaans's idea. Janchi was a disciple of his father, Hose Christiaans, and of the Donati family, from Italian ancestors. They also made these decorations, though without using any patterns, simply designing and applying them with common plaster as the material.

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's Aruba, *Breve Historia* as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these designs are not indigenous symbols, but only decorative fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao be-



gan this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr. Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decoration. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of

the Arends family could also be seen on the houses of the Bermudez or Croes families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their sons or daughters when they were getting married.

It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry—you can simply copy them and paint them. □

Source: E casnan Decora na Aruba (1976) by Ito Tromp.

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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
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Rock stacking and its harmful effects

(Oranjestad)—The organization Aruba Birdlife Conservation has in the past raised concerns about the phenomenon of “rock stacking” in the area of Baby Beach and warned about the dangers it poses, especially for children.

As known, “rock stacking” is not illegal in Aruba, but its impact on nature is harmful as the stones form part of the natural habitat of small

animal species living in Aruba's wilderness. Experts warn that “rock stacking” could even lead certain species to extinction.

In Aruba, much of the “rock stacking” also occurs near Arikok National Park. Although this activity is not illegal in Aruba, it may be time for park authorities to impose stricter regulations on this activity.

Tourists often believe that

the meaning behind this activity is making a wish, but they do not realize its negative impact.

Aruba Birdlife Conservation's post not only raises alarms about the activity but also now that this phenomenon has reached Baby Beach, some of the stacked stone towers are up to 1.7 meters high, which can be very dangerous, especially for children. □



Papiamentu words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamentu above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamentu you may encounter is “Bon bini.” Bon bini in Papiamentu means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamentu word for tourists.

Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say “hello” in Papiamentu—at least not of-



ficially. We often just use the English “hello” or “hey”, or Dutch “hallo” to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with “con bay?” or “con ta?” Con bay is a shortened version of “con ta bay?”, which essentially means “how are you?”

The word “con” in Papiamentu means “how?” and is pronounced with a rounder “o” sounds, like in the English word “cone”. “Ta bay” refers to how you

are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word “ayo” (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use “te oro”, which means “see you later”.

Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamentu is no different. Since Papiamentu is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Span-

ish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word “bon” means “good”, and while “dia” does not directly mean “morning” in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.

Bon tardi

In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use “bon tardi” to greet people, which means “good afternoon”. “Tardi” actually comes from the word “atardi”, which directly translates to “afternoon”. However, the shortened “tardi” is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

Bon nochi.

You guessed it, “bon nochi” means “good night”. Just like “tardi”, “nochi” is actually the shortened version of the word “anochi”.

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamentu. Just like Spanish, our yeses are “si” and our no's are “no”. Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say “se”, which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation.

However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is “danki”, which means literally “thank you”. “Danki” is derived from the Dutch word “bedankt”. Though we don't really have a translation for “I appreciate it” in English, we do use “masha danki” to convey the message. “Masha” means “a lot” or “very”, so “masha danki” means “thank you very much”. □

Aruba: The island of Aloes

ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been



introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States

and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.

Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) – Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi bonch'i rabo (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to

see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, baskets, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

***ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao**

***Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)**

***Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.**

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Traffic signs



(Oranjestad)—Though Aruba's traffic is relatively easy to manage, driving here—especially if it's your first time visiting—can be foreign. To help you out, here's a breakdown of some traffic signs you might encounter on the road.

Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed

out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar

sign crossed out. Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a

counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections.

This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

Picture credits:
aruba-travelguide.com

Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

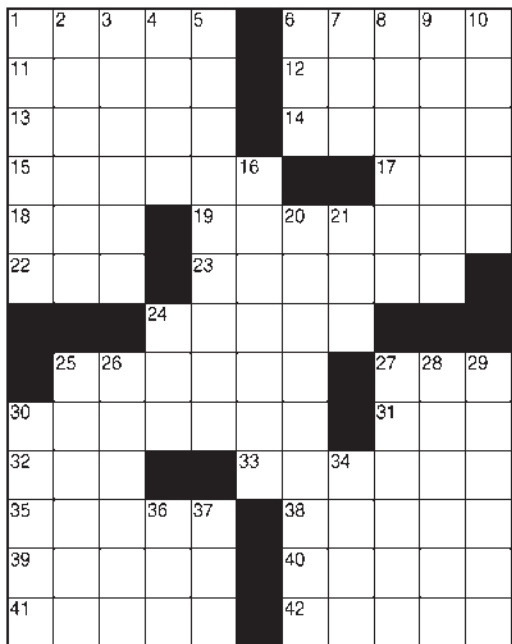
ACROSS

- 39 Lipstick slip
1 Went fast
6 Violinist
Stern advantage
11 Overhead of
12 Island south of Sicily
41 Lab work
42 Reason
13 Thin porridge
14 Acts sullen
15 Sinks, as a short putt
17 Cambridge sch.
18 Commotion
19 Marching beat
22 Sgt.'s superior
23 Portugal's place
24 Puts on ice
25 Stylized Japanese drama
27 Driving aid
30 Charles III's house
31 Maximum amount
32 Director Lee
33 Manly
35 Cold house
38 Lubricated

DOWN

- 1 Motley
2 Wear roughly
3 Clipped item
4 December 24 and 31
5 Yummy
6 Little terror
7 — Paulo
8 Reunion group
9 New York prison
10 Social class
16 "Lolita" author
20 Walking on air
21 Stammering sounds
24 Oil ingredient derived from marijuana
25 Checkers demand
26 View-points
27 Like some rebates
28 Fred, Steve, and Ethan
29 Promise
30 Jeans measure
34 Ascend
36 Stable bit
37 Hosp. parts

GET TO GAF FE
ARROW AVAIL
GAUGE BILLS
EASE ASE A
ODDS SITE
BEE OCTOPUS
ONTAP CRONE
EYELASH SUE
CALI DIMS
PATSPLOT
ALIKE UNITY
NOVAS MOVIE
TEENS PREEN



12-9

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-9 CRYPTOQUOTE

W'P WZ R LGGT FQRNV UWLSC

ZGE. ZGC VPGCWGZRQQK —

W'P MYDC GZ UGQQVU

DARCVD. — YZAZGEZ

Cryptoquote: READ THE BOOKS
THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO. THAT'S WHERE
THE GOOD STUFF IS. — LEVAR BURTON

Cruise ship Schedule: Dec. 01 - 07 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	01	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00	20.00	C	1
TUE	02	ROTTERDAM	07.00	****	B	1
		AIDAMAR	08.00	18.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
WED	03	ROTTERDAM - Dept.	****	17.00	B	
		BRITANNIA	07.00	18.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00	16.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	04	CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE	08.00	20.00	B	1
		CORAL PRINCESS	09.00	18.00	C	1
		SEABOURN OVATION	09.00	22.00	I	1
		SILVER SHADOW	08.00	18.00	H	1
FRI	05	CARNIVAL LIBERTY	09.00	22.00	C	1
SAT	06	KONINGS DAM	07.00	16.00	B	1
		AIDAPERLA	09.00	22.00	C	1
		STAR CLIPPER	09.00	18.00	G	1
SUN	07	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

	8	2		7				
7			9	1	5	2		8
		5	6		2			
8	4				1			
9			5		8	1	3	
					4	9	8	
5	2					3		1
	7	4	1	3	9	8		5
3			2		6	4		

Difficulty: ★★

12/2

Answer to previous puzzle

8	2	6	5	7	9	3	1	4
1	4	9	8	6	3	7	2	5
7	3	5	2	4	1	8	9	6
6	1	7	9	8	5	2	4	3
2	9	4	3	1	7	6	5	8
3	5	8	6	2	4	1	7	9
9	8	2	7	5	6	4	3	1
5	7	1	4	3	8	9	6	2
4	6	3	1	9	2	5	8	7

Difficulty: ★

12/1

Why Cyber Monday could break spending records despite economic uncertainty

By **WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS**

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After four days of deal-fueled spending sprees that kicked off on Thanksgiving, shoppers shifted their focus on Cyber Monday, which is expected to once again be the biggest sales day of the year for online retailers. Walmart was promoting up to 50% on fashion on its website among some of the deals, while online juggernaut Amazon was hoping to ply customers with discounts of up to 55%.

It's no secret that buying things online is now a staple of many people's everyday routines. And year after year, those purchases mount during the gift-giving holiday rush. Experts expect consumers to drive record Cyber Monday spending this year, despite wider economic uncertainty.

Adobe Analytics estimates that U.S. shoppers will spend \$14.2 billion online Monday, or 6.3% more than in 2024. Spending is expected to peak between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. local time, when Adobe expects \$16 million to pass through online shopping carts every minute nationwide.

U.S. consumers already spent \$11.8 billion online for Black Friday, \$6.4 billion on Thanksgiving Day and another \$11.8 billion over the weekend exceeding Adobe's forecasts. Purchases made across Cyber Week the five major shopping days between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday provides a strong indication of how much shoppers are willing to spend for the holidays.

"Cyber Week is off to a strong start," Vivek Pandya, lead analyst at Adobe Digital Insights, said. "Discounts are set to remain elevated through Cyber Monday, which we expect will remain the biggest online shopping day of the season and year."

Pandya said he will be analyzing Adobe data captur-



Shoppers browse for Black Friday deals at Atlantic Station outdoor mall, Friday, Nov. 28, 2025, in Atlanta, Ga.

Associated Press.

ing Cyber Monday sales to see if some of the spending momentum dissipated after a strong weekend.

Deals on electronics and apparel are expected to peak Monday at 30% and 26% off average listed prices, per Adobe's latest estimates. But other categories will still continue to see deep discounts including toys, which Adobe expects to reach 27% off listed prices.

Meanwhile, software company Salesforce which tracks digital spending from a range of retailers, including grocers estimates Cyber Monday's online

sales will total \$13.4 billion in the U.S. and \$53.7 billion globally. While the amount of money going into online shopping carts is expected to reach new heights Monday, rising retail prices also may contribute to any record sales figures that materialize. Consumers may be buying fewer total items. Experts say tighter budgets are causing many to shop with more precision than in years past such as focusing on a few "big ticket" purchases, for example, and spreading out what they buy over days of promotions in hopes of getting the most bang for

their buck. Businesses and households have watched anxiously for financial impacts from U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs on foreign imports. □



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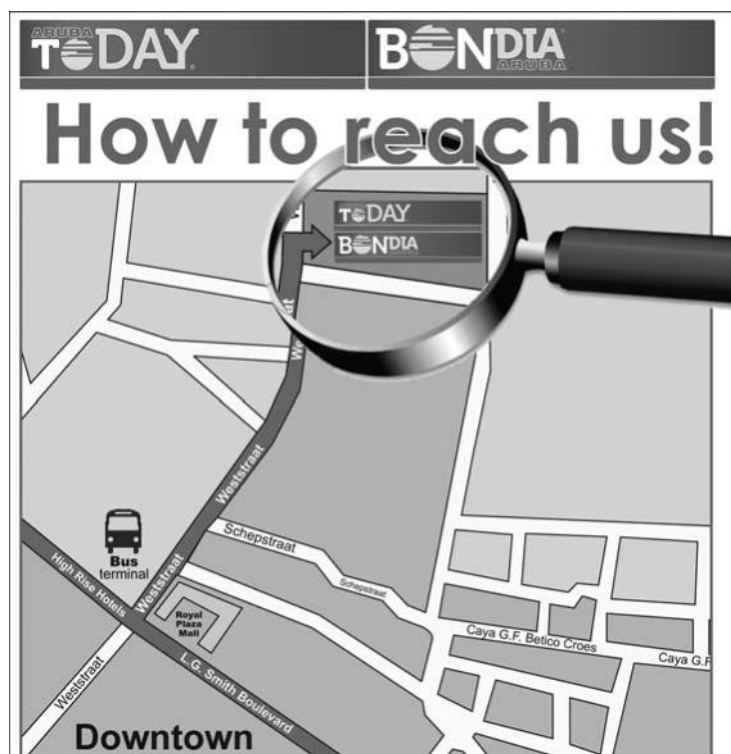
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OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
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EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Princess Aiko's popularity sparks calls to change Japan's male-only succession law

By **MARI YAMAGUCHI**
Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's beloved Princess Aiko is often cheered like a pop star.

During a visit to Nagasaki with Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the sound of her name being screamed by well-wishers along the roads overwhelmed the cheers for her parents.

As she turns 24 on Monday, her supporters want to change Japan's male-only succession law, which prohibits Aiko, the emperor's only child, from becoming monarch.

Along with frustration that the discussion on succession rules has stalled, there's a sense of urgency. Japan's shrinking monarchy is on the brink of extinction. Naruhito's teenage nephew is the only eligible heir from the younger generation.

Experts say the female ban should be lifted before the royal family dies out, but conservative lawmakers, including Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, oppose the change.

Aiko's popularity boosts demand for a female monarch.

Aiko has gained admirers since debuting as an adult royal in 2021, when she impressed the public as intelligent, friendly, caring and funny.

Support for Aiko as a future monarch increased following her first solo official overseas trip to Laos in November, representing the emperor. During the six-day visit, she met with top Laotian officials, visited cultural and historical venues and met with locals.

Earlier this year, Aiko accompanied her parents to Nagasaki and Okinawa. She has followed the example set by her father, who places great importance on passing down the tragedy of WWII to younger generations.

"I have always been rooting for Princess Aiko to be crowned," said Setsuko Matsuo, an 82-year-old atomic bombing survivor who came to Naga-



In this photo provided by the Imperial Household Agency of Japan, Princess Aiko, the daughter of Japan's Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, poses for a photo at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, Friday, Nov. 7, 2025.

saki's peace park hours before Aiko and her parents' scheduled arrival in the area. "I like everything about her, especially her smile ... so comforting," she told The Associated Press at the time.

Mari Maehira, a 58-year-old office worker who waited to cheer Aiko in Nagasaki, said she has seen Aiko grow up and "now we want to see her become a future monarch."

The princess' popularity has triggered some to pressure legislators to change the law.

Cartoonist Yoshinori Kobayashi has written comic books that push for a legal change to allow Aiko to become monarch, which supporters keep sending to parliamentarians to raise awareness and get their backing for the cause.

Others have set up YouTube channels and distributed leaflets to gain public attention on the issue.

Ikuko Yamazaki, 62, has been using social media to advocate for the succession of the emperor's first child regardless of gender. She says not having Aiko as a successor and the insistence on male-only monarchs will cause the monarchy to die out.

"The succession system

conveys the Japanese mindset regarding gender issues," Yamazaki said. "I expect having a female monarch would dramatically improve women's status in Japan."

Aiko's upbringing The popular princess was born on Dec. 1, 2001.

Soon after giving birth to Aiko, her mother, Harvard-educated former diplomat Masako, developed a stress-induced mental condition, apparently due to criticism for not producing a male heir, from which she is still recovering.

Aiko was known as a bright child who, as a sumo fan, memorized wrestlers' full names.

However, she also had faced difficulties: As an elementary school girl, she briefly missed classes because of bullying. As a teenager, she appeared extremely thin and missed classes for a month.

In 2024, Aiko graduated from Gakushuin University, where her father and many other royals studied. She has since participated in her official duties and palace rituals while also working at the Red Cross Society. On weekends, she enjoys taking walks with her parents and playing volleyball, tennis and badminton

with palace officials.

Japan's monarchy is at a 'critical state'

The 1947 Imperial House Law only allows male-line succession and forces female royals who marry commoners to lose their royal status.

The rapidly dwindling Imperial Family has 16 members, down from 30 three decades ago. All are adults.

Naruhito has only two potential younger male heirs, his 60-year-old younger brother, Crown Prince Akishino, and Akishino's 19-year-old son, Prince Hisahito. Prince Hitachi, former Emperor Akihito's younger brother and third in line to the throne, is 90.

Akishino acknowledged the aging and shrinking royal population, "but nothing can be done under the current system."

"I think all we can do right now is to scale back our official duties," he told reporters ahead of his 60th birthday Sunday.

Last year, the crown prince noted that royal members are "human beings" whose lives are affected by the discussion, a nuanced but rare comment. He has seen no change, though palace officials have sincerely taken his remark, Akishino said Sunday.

Aiko had also previously said she is aware of the declining royal population, but could not comment on the system. "Under the circumstances, I hope to sincerely serve every official duty and help the emperor and the empress, as well as other members of the Imperial Family."

The shortage of male successors is a serious worry for the monarchy, which some historians say has lasted for 1,500 years. It's also a reflection of Japan's broader problem of a rapidly aging and shrinking population.

"I think the situation is already critical," said Hideya Kawanishi, a Nagoya University professor and expert on monarchy. Its future is totally up to Hisahito and his potential wife's ability to produce a male offspring.

"Who wants to marry him? If anyone does, she would endure enormous pressure to produce a male heir while performing official duties at a superhuman capacity."

Hisahito must carry the burden and the Imperial Family's fate by himself, former Imperial Household Agency chief Shingo Haketa said in a Yomiuri newspaper article this year. "The fundamental question is not whether to allow a male or female succession line but how to save the monarchy."

Japan's male-only succession system is relatively new Japan traditionally had male emperors, but there have also been eight female monarchs. The last was Gosakuramachi, who ruled from 1762 to 1770.

The male-only succession rule became law in 1889 and was carried over to the postwar 1947 Imperial House Law.

Experts say the system had only previously worked with the help of concubines who, until about 100 years ago, produced half of the past emperors.

The government proposed allowing a female monarch in 2005, but Hisahito's birth allowed nationalists to scrap the proposal. □

NASCAR antitrust trial opens with huge stakes and Michael Jordan in the courtroom

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

The federal antitrust trial against NASCAR opened Monday with the star power of Michael Jordan on hand as a jury of nine was seated to hear allegations that the stock car series is a monopolistic bully that leaves its teams no option but to comply with rules and financing they don't agree with.

The retired NBA Hall of Famer is the co-owner of the 23XI Racing team at the top Cup Series level. 23XI and Front Row Motorsports sued the series last year rather than sign extension agreements on new charters, which are franchise-type designations that serve as the framework for the revenue stream between NASCAR and the teams.

The stakes are huge: The charters are at the heart of NASCAR's business model they guarantee a car a spot in the field each race week as well as a percentage of the purse and the disputes over how they work have dominated the series of late. A loss for the two teams could oust them from the series while a loss for NASCAR could mean a fundamental restructuring of how the series operates. Six men and three women were seated for a trial expected to last two weeks before U.S. District Judge Kenneth Bell, who asked for opening statements to be completed later Monday. Bell ruled that 23XI co-owner and star driver Denny Hamlin and Curtis Polk, the longtime business manager for Jordan and part of the team's ownership group, will be sequestered after opening statements before they testify.

Jordan's presence in the courtroom gallery near Hamlin was a factor: Among those dismissed from serving on the jury was a man who said he can't be impartial because "I like Mike" and another who said he had Michael Jordan posters on his walls growing up. A juror said



Michael Jordan arrives in the Western District of North Carolina on Monday Dec 1, 2025 for the start of the antitrust trial between 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports against NASCAR, in Charlotte, N.C.

they were a North Carolina fan but noted the football team at Jordan's alma mater is not "doing too well right now" to which the retired star shook his head and laughed.

NASCAR executives in the courtroom included chairman Jim France and vice chair Lisa France Kennedy, two scions of the family that founded NASCAR in 1948 and still owns it.

23XI and Front Row were the only two teams out of 15 to refuse to sign extensions on new charter agreements last fall. The teams wanted multiple concessions, and when they didn't get them, they went to court. The case has churned through hearings and arguments for more than a year despite calls from other NASCAR teams to settle. Bell even helped mediate a failed two-day summit in October.

A NASCAR victory could put 23XI, Front Row and their six combined cars out of business. Their charters now being held by NASCAR would likely be sold. The last charter went for \$45 million, and NASCAR has indicated there is interest from potential buyers including private equity firms.

A win for the teams would lead to monetary damages and the potential demolition of NASCAR as it is run today. The judge has the power to unravel a monopoly, and nothing is off the table, from ordering a sale of NASCAR to the dismantling of the charter system.

The allegations

The charter system introduced in 2016 is NASCAR's version of the franchise model used by most professional sports leagues. Being chartered guarantees that car a spot in the 40-car field for all 38 races, as well as a defined payout from the weekly purse.

Even with the charters, the teams have argued that the revenue model is not viable. The teams wanted more favorable terms for the charters, including having them made permanent (they are renewable and revocable), a larger percentage of revenues and a voice in governance.

23XI and Front Row also argue NASCAR has a vice grip on all aspects of the racing series and allege a monopoly based on exclusivity clauses, ownership of most of the race tracks on the Cup Series schedule

and its control of the rules and regulations.

NASCAR says it has not violated antitrust law because it has done nothing to restrain trade beyond normal business practices.

NASCAR has argued that payouts in the 2025 charter agreement increased and prove the series is not anticompetitive. NASCAR has also cited the option for cars to enter races as "open teams" and try to make the field in one of four nonchartered spots on qualifying speed. 23XI and Front Row raced this season as open teams, and while their combined six cars made every race, it cost the organizations millions in purse money.

The pretrial discovery process revealed NASCAR made more than \$100 million in 2024.

Behind-the-scenes drama

The discovery phase was brutal for both sides. The antitrust allegations have exposed salacious personal communications, NASCAR's finances and a deep contempt between some of the top executives in the sport and its participants. NASCAR Commissioner Steve Phelps was among

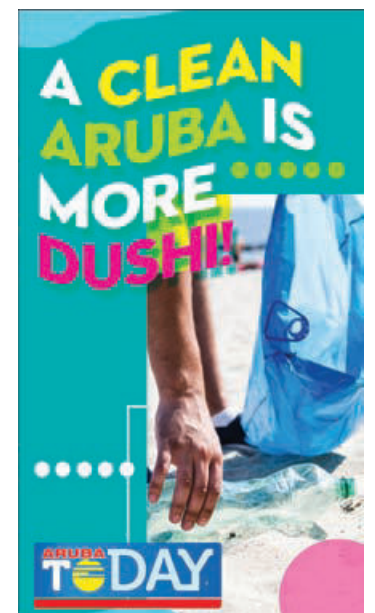
leadership who in a discussion with other NASCAR executives called Hall of Fame team owner Richard Childress a "dinosaur," an "idiot" and a "stupid red-neck." The discussion also included a reference that Childress "owes his entire fortune to NASCAR" and needed "to be taken out back and flogged."

Another NASCAR executive alleged that fans of the sport can't read, and multiple series leaders admonished Hall of Fame driver Tony Stewart's summer short-track series, SRX, and threatened to have it killed because NASCAR drivers were participating.

On the other side, the president of 23XI was found to have said France had to die in order to receive favorable charter terms, Hamlin admitted his dislike for the France family, one of Jordan's advisers said Hamlin wasn't a good businessman and Jordan joked that he loses more money in a casino than he pays one of his drivers.

Hamlin, a three-time Daytona 500 winner who less than a month ago had the Cup Series championship slip through his fingers, warned this weekend that the gloves will be off during the trial.

"Our fans have been brainwashed with (NASCAR's) talking points for decades," Hamlin wrote on social media. "Lies are over starting Monday morning. It's time for the truth. It's time for change." □





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Spain hurting without Bonmatí before Women's Nations League final vs Germany

By **TALES AZZONI**
AP Sports Writer

MADRID (AP) — Spain will defend its Women's Nations League title amid the letdown of losing one of its best players just two days before the final.

Three-time Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmatí broke her leg in training on Sunday and will not play in Tuesday's second leg against Germany in Madrid. The teams drew 0-0 in the first leg on Friday in Germany.

"It's a huge loss," Spain coach Sonia Bermúdez said Monday. "Yesterday the mood was a bit down because it's hard when a teammate is injured. We hope she recovers as soon as possible. The team is fine and knows they'll have all the support in the world. We want to dedicate the victory to those who are injured. Aitana wanted to be in the final with us, but we



Barcelona's Aitana Bonmatí, right, and her teammates leave the pitch at the end of the women's Champions League opening phase soccer match between Chelsea FC and FC Barcelona, in London, Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025.

Associated Press.

have to prioritize the players' health." Bonmatí landed awkwardly in an acci-

dental collision during training and tests diagnosed a fracture of the midfielder's

left fibula. "Absences like Aitana's throw you off because nobody likes to see

a teammate getting injured and suffering," Spain captain Irene Paredes said. "But we're going to move forward, we have other players and everyone is capable of contributing."

Bermúdez, a former Spain captain, said whoever she picks to replace Bonmatí will be able to keep the team playing at a high level.

"Any of the 24 players are more than ready," she said. "The good thing is that the squad is very versatile, players interpret the game well in different positions, so we have multiple options."

Bermúdez took over the squad in August to replace Montse Tomé, and is looking for her first title at the helm of the national team. "Bonmatí is one of the best players in the world at the moment, and still, Spain is in a position to replace every player," Germany coach Christian Wück said. □

2026 Giro to start in Bulgaria, be decided in the Dolomites, and finish in Rome

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Next year's Giro d'Italia will start with three stages in Bulgaria

and will likely be decided in the Dolomites before the mostly ceremonial finish in Rome. The route for the

109th Giro, scheduled for May 8-31, was presented in Rome on Monday.

It's the 16th time the Italian Grand Tour is starting abroad. After the opening in Bulgaria, the peloton will fly to Calabria to begin a climb up boot-shaped Italy, passing through Naples and a difficult ascent to Blockhaus in Abruzzo.

The race's only time trial is a 40.2-kilometer (25-mile) individual race against the clock in Stage 10 from Viareggio to Massa along the Tuscan coast.

The toughest leg, known as the queen stage, is slated to be Stage 19 from Feltre to Alleghe going over five climbs including the

Passo Giau, which marks the "Cima Coppi" as the race's highest point at 2,233 meters (7,326 feet). Then there are two ascents the next day to Piancavallo in the penultimate leg, which could decide the winner.

"This year we have designed a more modern Giro, with shorter stages that are no less demanding for the general classification contenders, alternating with stages that will suit riders looking to make an impact with long-range attacks," race director Mauro Vegni said. "There will be seven summit finishes, the same number of stages for the sprinters."

The nine-stage Women's Giro will start in Cesenatico on May 30 and finish in Saluzzo on June 7. There are two summit finishes at Nevegal and Sestriere, with the latter stage including the famous climb to Colle delle Finestre. Adam Yates and Elisa Longo Borghini won the Giro this year. Yates is expected to try and defend his title, and could be joined by Visma-Lease a Bike teammate Jonas Vingegaard, the two-time Tour de France champion. Other challengers could include rising Mexican rider Isaac del Toro, who lost the lead to Yates in the penultimate stage this year, and Primož Roglič, the 2023. □



Elisa Longo Borghini and Simon Yates hold trophies during the presentation of the 2026 Giro d'Italia man and women in Rome, Italy, Dec. 1, 2025.

Associated Press.